

REMARKS

Claims 1-51 are pending in the present application.

The Office Action (§§ 1-6) subjects claims 1-51 to a restriction requirement between the following inventions: (i) claims 1-7, 14-17, 22-33, 40-43 and 48-51; (ii) Claims 8-9 and 34-35; (iii) claims 10-13 and 36-39; and (iv) claims 18-21 and 44-47. In response, Applicants had provisionally elected claims 1-7, 14-17, 22-33, 40-43 and 48-51, without traverse, for initial prosecution on the merits. Applicants now affirm this election and have hereby canceled the withdrawn claims 8-13, 18-21, 34-39 and 44-47.

The Office Action (§ 7) objects to Figure 11, because the AGC Block Diagram is numbered as item 112, and should be numbered as item 116. In response, Applicants have hereby amended Figure 11 to change the numbering for the AGC Block Diagram to item 116.

The Office Action (§ 8) objects to the Specification for various specified informalities, and Applicants have hereby amended the Specification to correct the specified informalities, and to correct a few additional informalities discovered by the Applicants.

The Office Action (§ 9) objects to claim 22, because the step labeled as “(e)” should be labeled as “(i)”, and in response, Applicants have amended claim 22 accordingly.

The Office Action (§ 15) indicates that claims 22-25 and 48-51 are allowed.

The Office Action (§ 16) objects to claims 4-7, 16-17, 30-33 and 42-43 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In response, Applicants have hereby amended claim 1 to include all the limitations of objected to claim 4 (which depended therefrom), and amended claims 5-7, 16-17, 30-33 and 42-43 to be in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Office Action (§ 11) rejects claims 1-3, 26, 27 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by USPN 6,493,360 (Nishimura). In response, Applicants have canceled the rejected claims 26, 27 and 29, and submit that claims 2 and 3 are allowable because they depend from claim 1 (which is now allowable in view of the amendments described above).

The Office Action (§ 12) rejects claims 14, 15, 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by USPN 6,023,477 (Dent). In response, Applicants have canceled the rejected claims 14, 15, 40 and 41.

The Office Action rejects claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishimura in view of Dent. In response, Applicants have canceled the rejected claim 28.

Applicants, therefore, respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein; and no amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless Applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues requiring adverse action in any of the claims now pending in the application, it is requested that the Examiner telephone Mr. Craig Plastrik, at 301-601-7252, so that appropriate arrangements can be made for resolving such issues as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully Submitted,



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IN THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the drawing sheet with Figures 9, 10 and 11 with the attached replacement sheet for these figures, in which the AGC Block Diagram of Figure 11 has been renumbered as element "116".

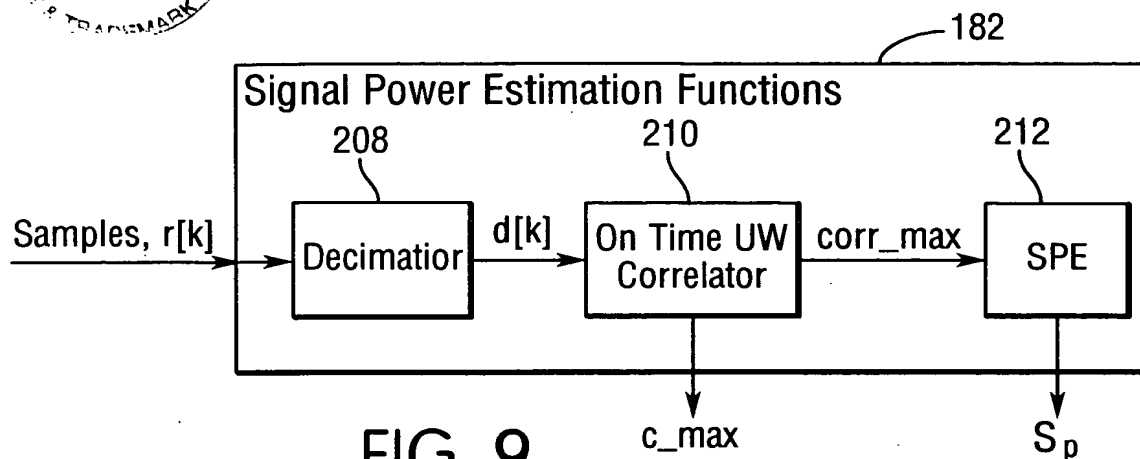


FIG. 9

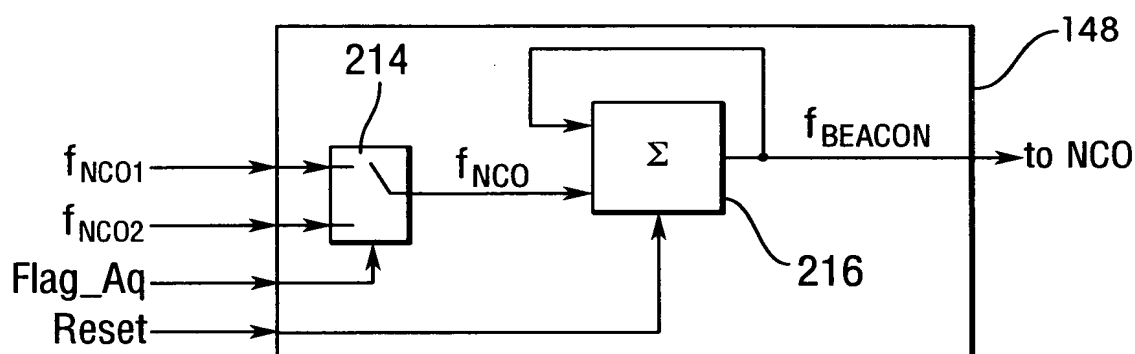
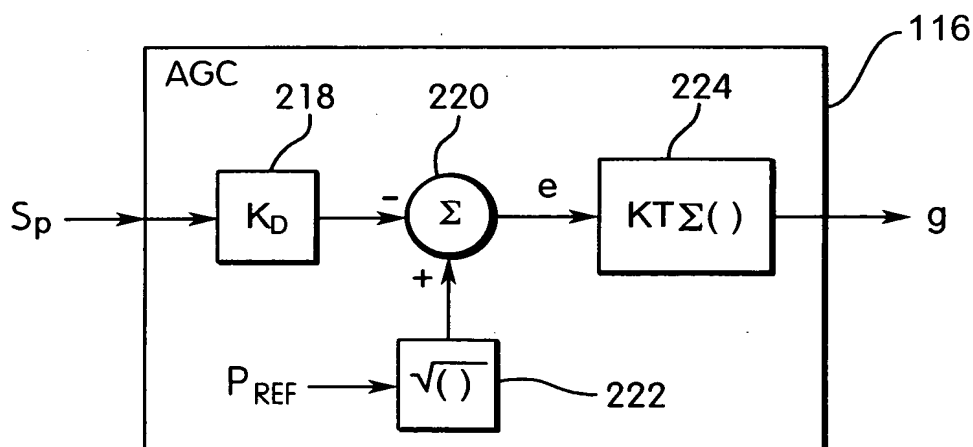


FIG. 10



AGC Block Diagram

FIG. 11